

Invasive Plant Species Assessment Working Group
March 13, 2003
Ft. Benjamin Harrison State Park
Natural Resources Education Center

Attending: Tom Good (Div of Reclamation), Ken Collins (NRCS), Darrell Brown (NRCS), David Gorden (ASLA), Bob Waltz (Div. of Ent. and PPath), Dave Forgey (dairy farmer), Rick Phillabaum (INDOT), Lee Casebere (Div of Nature Preserves), Don Ruch (IN Acad. of Science- Biodiversity and Natural Areas Committee), Mike Cline (INLA), Paula Williams (INLA), Ryan Cassidy (IDEM), Jason Randolph (IDEM – 401 section)

Introductions were made.

Update on reed canary grass assessment: Ellen reported on last week's meeting to assess reed canary grass (RCG) using the assessment tool. She thanked everyone who came to the meeting despite very icy roads and reported that it had been a very good meeting. She provided four handouts summarizing the work. First, the "Official Reed Canary Grass Results (3/6/03)" assessment tool was handed out; this version of the assessment tool has the answers chosen by the subcommittee for RCG underlined. Second, the "Summary of Comments and Rationale for Scoring" was handed out, which lists the members of the subcommittee and tracks the discussions they had which led to the answers chosen. Third, the "*Phalaris arundinacea* Summary" sheet was handed out, which summarizes much of the information from the 16 survey reports that were received into a more comprehensible form. Finally, the "Recommendations for Reed Canary Grass" sheet was handed out, summarizing the subcommittee's recommendations based on the assessment.

After the summary, Bob called for initial reactions to the assessment. No one disagreed with the subcommittee's findings. We went through the recommendations, and each affected agency or group spoke on the implications for the changes suggested. Ellen commented that one of the difficult things in setting recommendations was that the subcommittee was not clear on current policies or use of RCG in many of the agencies.

*****Each government agency should come to the next IPSAWG meeting with clarification on their current rules or policies re. RCG, and what would be necessary to change them. ***** We also discussed needing to decide whether we attempt to follow through with policy changes species by species, or waiting until several species had been assessed and deal with them as a group.

Agency/group reactions:

DNR – Bob said he would follow through on discussing this issue with the deputy directors. ***Divisions will check into current policies and rules on this species and report back.*** No one was sure on who authors the Indiana Drainage Handbook – need to find that out so we can suggest revisions to it. ***Ken C. has it on his bookshelf, so he'll check into authorship and report at the next meeting (and bring it along so we can all see it).***

INDOT – Rick reported that INDOT does not use “negative lists” – instead, they set their seed specs and require they be followed. No current seed specs use RCG; however, he did note that since there is no prohibition against RCG or other species, it is possible that it could be included in seed specs in the future.

NRCS – Darrell reported that pasture and hay land seeding is the only standard practice that allows RCG; ***he will doublecheck that it is being removed from the streambank stabilization FOTG currently in revision.*** (FOTGs may be accessed at in.usda.nrcs.gov) He felt it would be possible to include additional information about invasiveness and management needs in the pasture/ hay land standard when it is revised. He also suggested that training for the 3-4 NRCS forage specialists in IN would be appropriate.

IDEM – Jason and Ryan discussed how IDEM – 401 section deals with the monitoring and mitigation for 401 permits. Their rules require mitigation wetlands to be free of purple loosestrife, phragmites, and Eurasian water milfoil, and to have less than 15% of reed canary grass and cattails within five years of establishment for two consecutive years. Given this, those planting mitigation wetlands are not likely to include RCG in the mix. ***Jason will check on the feasibility of actually making a rule prohibiting RCG in seed mixes. He will also check into other IDEM sections and their policy/rule on RCG.***

Cooperative Extension Service – Horticulture – This agency was not included in the recommendations list, but Mike Cline pointed out it’s a very important agency to reach with all these recommendations. Their Master Gardener’s program and extension horticulture bulletins are an excellent way to spread these recommendations. ***Bob W. will contact Peggy Sellers in her new position over the Master Gardener’s program and invite her to get re-involved in the committee.***

Nursery/Landscape Architects Professionals – Mike suggested that INLA would be able to include such recommendations in their newsletter, and link their website to the IPSAWG website. He raised the question of how to get such recommendations into nursery catalogs, given how many out-of-state suppliers there are. He asked if there were examples from other states of getting caution statements included in catalogs. Ellen said she’d check with the group in Florida who developed the original assessment tool that we’ve revised. She did check – and found out that other than the Florida NLA going on record in their newsletters with caution and restriction statements, they were not incorporated elsewhere.

Botanic Gardens and Arboreta – We need to develop a list of the botanic gardens and arboreta in IN. ***Ellen will work on this.***

Once the IPSAWG website is up and running, we will get these recommendations posted. We need a way to track all the recommendations and who’s responsible for what.

Website: Glenn is working on it, but the subcommittee hasn’t had a chance to meet yet. Once he has the appropriate information, he’ll be able to post it. The DNR will be developing an invasive species website largely focused on program pests – plants and animals. Ellen has some webpages that could be used for IPSAWG – a survey form to report new sightings, etc.

DNR rule concepts: Bob led a theoretical discussion on how the DNR ought to deal with new plant species/cultivars being brought into Indiana each year. Should there be a

review process to keep out those species that may be invasive, or should the state continue to be in a reactive mode, waiting for evidence of invasiveness in the state before reacting? We had a good discussion. While there was support for the idea of somehow identifying invasive species before they become a problem, there were concerns about how feasible it is to review hundreds of species/cultivars per year. Darrell pointed out that the amount of genetic modification going on is increasing very rapidly, and this will result in more and more cultivars to address. Perhaps review could be limited to cultivars of those species or genera already shown to be invasive through the assessment process, and ignore things like new peony cultivars. Who bears responsibility- those selling or those buying? Bob used as an example the current system for butterflies – those who wish to sell butterflies into Indiana must apply for a permit. It was suggested that for plants, the appropriate level of review is clearly at the federal level, not at the state level. Bob stated that there is work on such a federal review system, which would take the burden off the states.

Next species assessment – crown vetch: *Ellen will send a note out to those who might be interested in being involved in the assessment of crown vetch.* No one sells it as a plant in Indiana – just seed sales – so the nursery industry does not have a big concern. We'll need Larry Nees to help us with seed sales information again – that was very helpful with RCG.

**Next IPSAWG meeting – Tuesday, April 7 at 9:30 am in
Fort Ben – NREC Training Room**